

THE PATRIOT

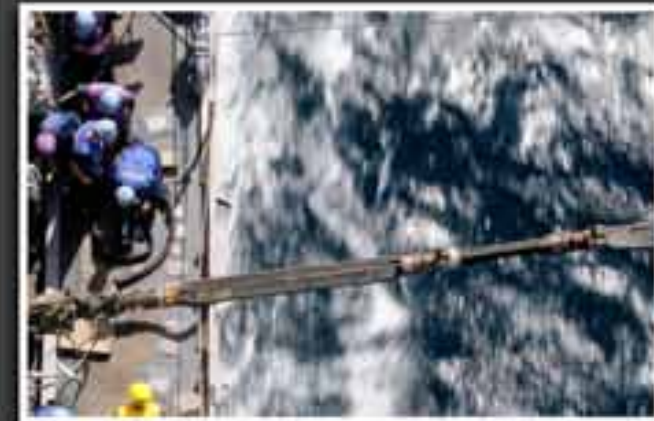
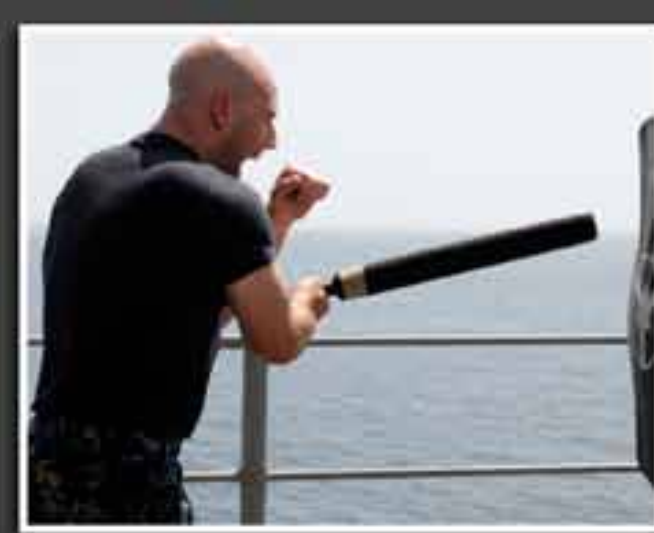
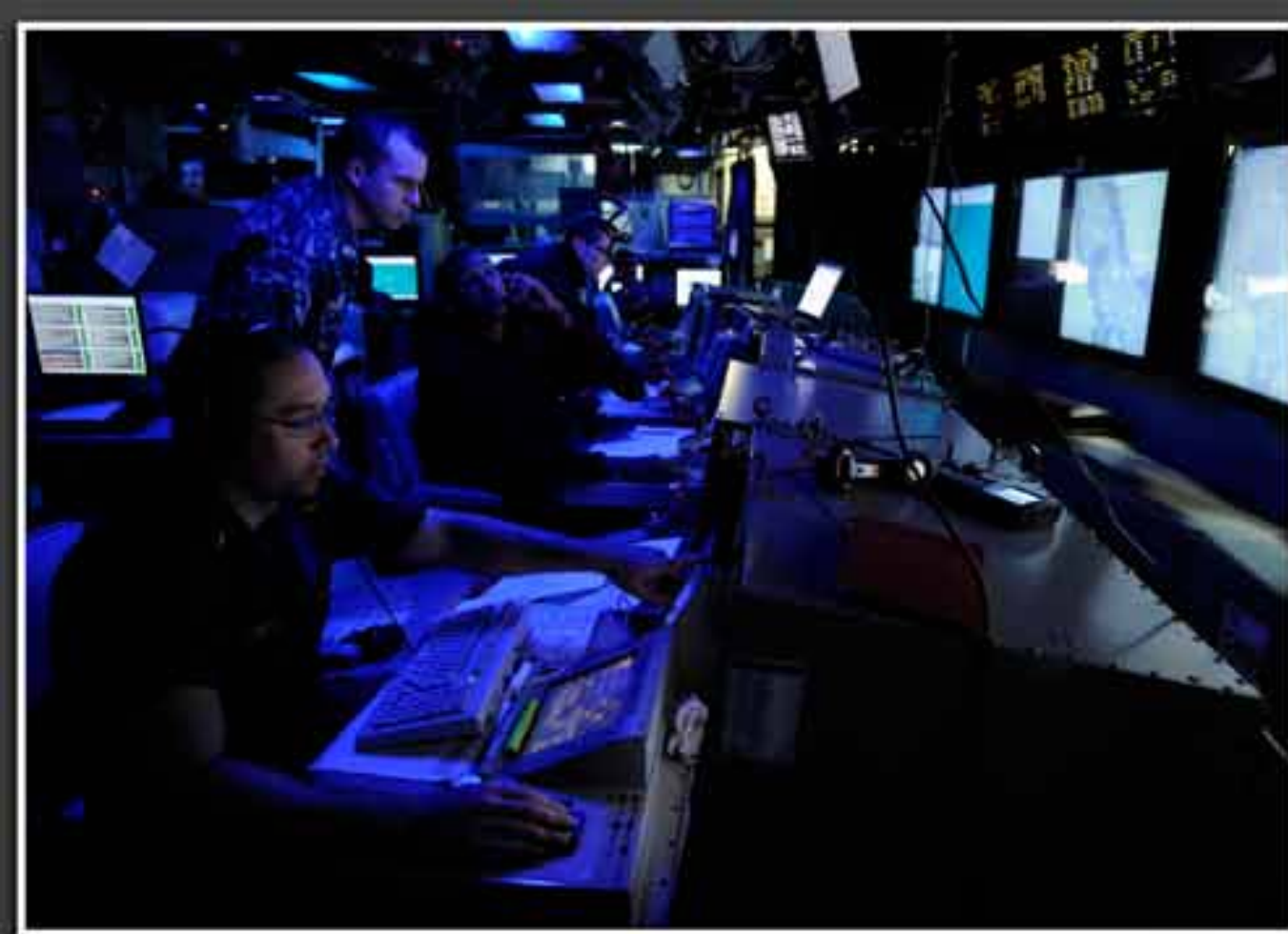
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MARCH 2012







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Greetings to all BUNKER HILL supporters. I hope you have had a great start to spring. We are doing well here in the North Arabian Sea as we wrap up some additional time on station supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. As I am sure you are all well aware, we are beginning the final third of our scheduled deployment period and right now we are looking forward to a little time off duty as we prepare to pull in to Dubai for a little R&R. The crew loved our last visit to Dubai in February and they are anxious to spend a little more time in the Malls and Water Parks before we get back to work at the end of the month.

March has been a busy month for the team. We completed several weeks on station in the Arabian Gulf supporting the CARL VINSON as they conducted flight operations and training near Kuwait. We then transited out the Straits of Hormuz and conducted additional missions in support of troops on the ground in Afghanistan. The time has flown by and it is hard to believe that in about a week we will begin our transit back east (barring any unforeseen schedule changes). Your team is performing very well and earned praise from Commander, Fifth Fleet and Commander, Carrier Strike Group One for their efforts as Air Defense Commander over the last two months in theater. You can be proud of all that your team has done in support of our nation's combat and Theater Security missions over these last many weeks.

A word or two about the way ahead as I am sure there are many of you who are concerned about how much time you will have with your loved ones upon return. Bottom line...we will execute a full 30 day stand down and leave period in May/June. Following this, we will have a short underway period but then much of July will also be spent in port. We will do a reasonable amount of underway time in August to ensure many of our new teammates are getting the training they will need for the future (we expect a lot of turnover this summer). We then move into a long maintenance period when we will be in a shipyard environment with no underway time. So for those who have lived through a long stretch of deployed time for the BKH team, there is some down time coming. More to follow on the specifics when we are home.

Not much else to report for this month. Please keep the mail coming for your sailors...they do love Mail Call.

All the best to our family and friends

CAPT M. J. Ford

BUNKER HILL family,

Busy, busy, busy. Spring cleaning on BUNKER HILL has taken on a whole new meaning (you would not BELIEVE how much dust there is in the air out here - many days the blowing sand makes it seem as if we are driving through heavy fog!). So, we're cleaning up our spaces, cleaning up our files, cleaning all of the administrative "stuff" off of our desks, and making preparations for the training cycle when we return. Letters from home indicate that, if anything, you all have been busier than we have with spring sports, family activities and spring cleaning of your own.

As you will see in the rest of the newsletter, this month has been a continuation of our work in 5th Fleet. A lot of flying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, multiple transits of the Strait of Hormuz, and several interactions with other Navies (Iran, Pakistan, and even the Russian Federation Navy). We also played host to members of the press, including Mr. Bret Stephens of the Wall Street Journal and Mr. Dan Rather. I'll just say that they write better articles than I do.

This will be my last newsletter article as Executive Officer - my relief (LCDR Jason Patterson) will be arriving during our next port visit - and I just want to take a quick moment to thank everyone onboard and ashore for all that you do. When I first reported, I was told that BUNKER HILL functioned more like a family than a crew - and I am happy to say that's true. It is a great ship filled with and supported by the most dedicated, hard working group imaginable. It has been my great pleasure to be a part of this family.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Connolly
LCDR USN
Executive Officer

CMC



BUNKER HILL Family.

The month of March flew by like an SH-60B Seahawk helicopter fly-by from our air detachment HSL-49 Angry Beavers. After 37 days out at sea in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, your Sailors received another port visit to Jebel Ali and Dubai. This time around the port visit was used for work and leisure ensuring maintenance was up to date on the ship and that our Sailors still had the opportunity to relax on their time off in the Oasis and downtown Dubai.

March was packed with events all caught on camera by our very own Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class John Grandin. 3 reenlistment ceremonies, 9 Enlisted Surface Warfare Pinning's, and 27 awards were given out during this month. The Chief Petty Officers mess manned the grills and cooked up and served burgers, hot dogs, chicken and various other food while the crew enjoyed a steel beach picnic and their first swim call of the deployment.

I would like to congratulate our January to March 2012 Sailors of the Quarter, Damage Controlman Fireman Retland as "Blue Jacket of the Quarter", Sonar Technician 2nd Class Greene as "Junior Sailor of the Quarter" and Gunners Mate 1st Class Quinones as "Sailor of the Quarter."

This month we hosted a couple Distinguished Visitors from prominent civilian news agencies and our very own Commander of Carrier Strike Group 1 (CSG-1) Rear Adm. Shannon. Bret Stephens a journalist from the Wall Street Journal and television news icon Dan Rather were transferred aboard the Bunker Hill and had the chance to experience an underway replenishment and a Strait of Hormuz transit and ask our Sailors what it takes to be a Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser Sailor.

This month I would like to welcome Prospective Executive Officer Lt. Cmdr. Jason Patterson and his family to the Bunker Hill team and say fair winds and following seas to Lt. Cmdr. Brian Connolly and his family who are detaching April 1st. Lt. Cmdr. Connolly has been a driving force to the success of Bunker Hill and the mission put forth on Carrier Strike Group 1. Lt. Cmdr. Connolly led as Carrier Strike Group Air Defense Commander on two consecutive deployments. I would like to thank Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Rivera and Ombudsman Danice Foyias for coordinating family video teleconferences throughout this deployment. VTC's allow our Sailors to connect to their friends and families at home and has been a great morale booster during these long periods away from home. Lastly, I would like to welcome Culinary Specialist Seaman Apprentice Kerry Jones, Operations Specialist 2nd Class Kristofer Rogerson, Fire Controlman 1st Class Bruce Maples, Seaman Teresa Nguyen, Lt. j.g. Melissa Williams, Ensign Krishna Anderson and Logistic Specialist 3rd Class Richmond Voss as the newest additions to our Bunker Hill family and team.

CMDCM Beda V. Santiago

CHAPS



Bunker Hill Family and Friends.

Greetings again from Dubai, UAE. As I write this we have just pulled into port again for another well deserved break from the daily routine. The crew knows that we are over the hump and nearly everyone has been keeping their spirits up. We have received quite a few new shipmates in the past several weeks and we have had fun welcoming them into the family. It is always exciting to see new faces because they bring new stories and experiences with them.

How is your anticipation level for our homecoming? In my Christian tradition Easter is right around the corner and I have been making a point in worship services in preparing everyone for that celebration. I never want Easter to sneak up on us and then the day arrives and we are unprepared. The same goes for our anticipation of homecoming. Now is the time to communicate expectations with one another and make the dreams of our first days together a reality.

Your Bunker Hill crew has been working extremely hard and we know that you have been doing the same on the home front. We'll be home soon, but in the meantime if I can be of any service to you please do not hesitate to contact me.

God's blessings be on your and your family,
Chaplain Jim Dewey
deweyj@cg52.navy.mil

WELCOME ABOARD

LT. CMDR. JASON PATTERSON



Greetings BUNKER HILL Families and Friends,

I am extremely honored to be joining the BUNKER HILL team as the new Executive Officer of the best Cruiser in the Fleet. My previous assignment was at the Navy Personnel Command in Millington, TN. My wife, Cassandra, and I along with our two boys, Cooper and Chase, are very excited to be returning to the San Diego area.

As I write this in the middle of the turnover process, I have been very impressed with the professionalism shown by the sailors of BUNKER HILL. I consider myself very lucky to be joining this cohesive group of warfighters. While the ship's mission in the FIFTH Fleet Operating Area may be coming to an end, there is still a considerable amount of work for us to do during the transit home. From talking to the crew in the past couple of days, the message is pretty consistent that everyone is anxiously anticipating our return to home port. Fortunately, this summer's schedule will afford some much needed time to spend with family and friends. This often isn't said enough, but your contribution to the service to our country is just as great as those of us on the ship. I want to pass my personal thanks for your sacrifice and support that you provide your loved ones.

Finally, I want to wish Fair Winds and Following Seas to the outgoing Executive Officer, LCDR Brian Connolly. He has done an outstanding job making BUNKER HILL mission ready and his presence on BUNKER HILL will be sorely missed.

Thanks again and I look forward to meeting you all in San Diego.

Very Respectfully,

LCDR Jason P. Patterson
Executive Officer



GETTING STARTED



This issue of the Patriot details operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility and what our Bunker Hill Sailors have been up to during this last month. Swim calls, steel beach picnics, live fire exercises and lots of training have kept our Sailors busy and entertained. More than four months of this deployment has gone by since leaving homeport San Diego and we are charging hard to keep the crew safe and keep their spirits high during this high paced deployment.

WALL STREET JOURNAL

Bret Stephens a Wall Street Journalist visited the guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill (CG 52) and Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1 Feb. 27.

Stephens visit allowed him to learn about 5th fleet operations in theatre and the unique challenges CSG-1 and Bunker Hill go through on a daily basis.

"Mr. Stephens visit was made possible with the help of 5th Fleet, commanded by Vice Admiral Fox, as well as Rear Admiral Shannon of CSG-1 and Capt. Michael Ford, commanding officer of the Bunker Hill," said Ensign Livy Coe the collateral duty Public Affairs officer onboard the Bunker Hill.

The reporter embarked on the Bunker Hill for a total of two days experiencing the life of a guided-missile cruiser Sailor.

Ice cream socials and an underway replenishment gave the reporter time to talk to Sailors and see what happens during and after work hours.

Stephens had the opportunity to sit in on a round-table discussion with senior officers from CSG-1, including Admiral Shannon, Captain Ford, and various warfare commanders.

Bunker Hill and CSG-1 are currently deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility conducting maritime security operations and theater security operation efforts.



MWR DANCE LESSONS

STEEL BEACH PICNIC SWIM CALL



ANGRY



BEAVERS



The air department aboard Bunker Hill is an essential asset to the mission put at hand here in the 5th Fleet AOR. The crew work day and night keeping their two SH-60B seahawk helicopters operational and ready to go at a moments notice. "Flight quarters, flight quarters" is heard on a daily basis letting the ship know that we are launching and receiving our helicopter. Anti-submarine warfare, search and rescue, drug interdiction, anti-ship warfare, cargo lift, and special operations are a few of the capabilities the air department have to offer on our mission at hand.



GUNS & AMMUNITION

Sailors aboard the Bunker Hill ensure our weapons are in pristine working condition during the period of our underway. Maintenance is performed periodically to keep our weapons ready to engage at a moments notice. Weapons qualifications and calibration keep our sailors skilled and accurate if any threat were to arise.



SAR & REXTORP



SRF BRAVO



UNREP



SANDSTORM

STRAIT OF HORMUZ





RHIB OPS



WOMENS HISTORY MONTH



The diversity committee aboard the Bunker Hill held a women's history month celebration on the mess decks March 31. The ceremony began with an opening invocation from the commanding officer and was followed by a prayer from our chaplain. The diversity committee prepared several speeches on prominent women who have made a great impact on the world and presented them during the ceremony. Culinary Specialist 1st Class Shaw closed the celebration by reciting a poem by Maya Angelou.



UNITED THROUGH READING

Our Sailors will soon be making their way home- something we are all looking forward to! By participating in United Through Reading®, the Sailor and families of the USS Bunker Hill (CG-52) have been able to stay connected in a special way. The DVDs we have received and the pictures, video, and other responses we have sent back have built memories and moments that have served us well throughout this deployment. The benefits of our time spent reading aloud will continue to be evident even after our Sailor comes home. As we talk about all the things we will soon do together, think about making reading aloud on a regular basis one of those special activities.

Let us know about your family's experience participating in the United Through Reading® program. Simply go online and fill out a Homefront Participant's survey on our website, www.unitedthroughreading.org. This is your opportunity to provide United Through Reading with feedback that they will use to continue to improve the program. Do not hesitate to contact your UTR Homefront Coordinator, Cynthia Reyes, for any questions, comments or concerns at cynrreyes@gmail.com.

BENEFITS

- Fosters creative thinking, problem solving and conflict resolution skills.
- Expands a child's vocabulary and enhances language and communication skills.
- Homecomings are easier for parent and child.
- Increases a sense of security through the emotional closeness established during reading.

